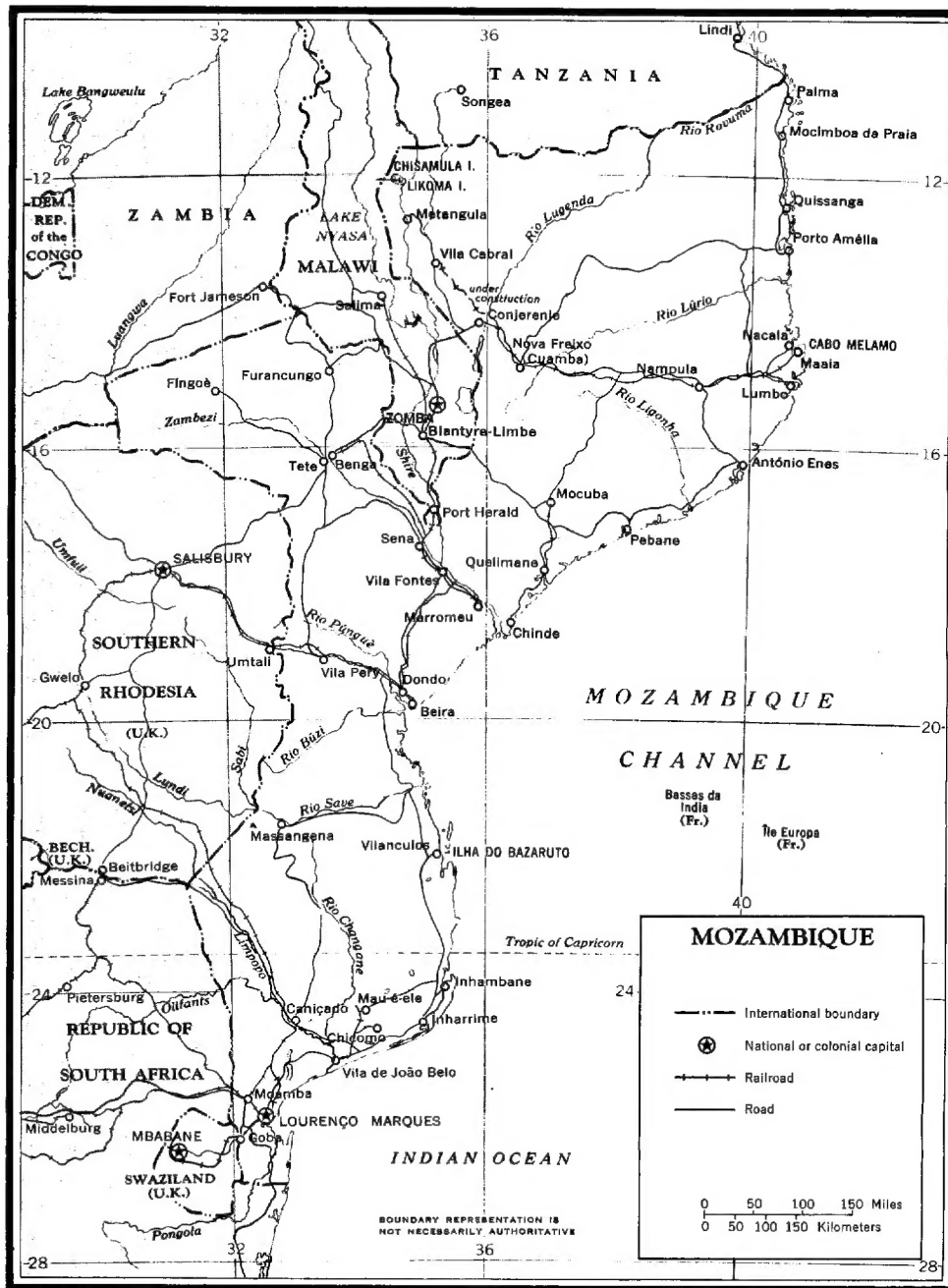


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Current Intelligence Country Handbook

NIGERIA



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
Office of Current Intelligence

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NIGERIA

I. Political

On 15 January 1966, a handful of middle-grade army officers led by a Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu executed a well-planned coup, ostensibly motivated by deep popular discontent over election rigging, corruption and venality of politicians, and ethnic regional antagonisms exacerbated by the leading political parties. Assassinated in the coup were Prime Minister Balewa, Northern and Western Premiers Bello and Akintola, and several top army officers, mostly northerners. The reins of government were seized—before anarchy could set in—by army commander Maj. Gen. Aguiyi-Ironsi, who has placed the mutinous coup leaders under “protective custody” yet promised publicly to carry forward the ideals they espoused. Ironsi’s proclamation in May, however, of a unitary structure for Nigeria to replace the former regions and thereby eliminate “regionalism” sparked rioting in the North, which appears determined to resist losing its own identity.

Ironsi and other military and police leaders make up a ruling Supreme Military Council and the Executive Council (acting as the interim Cabinet). Permanent secretaries handle the day-to-day affairs of the former regional and national ministries. Military governors have been appointed for each of the four major administrative divisions corresponding to the former regions but now referred to as “provincial groupings.” A new constitution has been under study but is not likely to be approved before mid-1967. Political party activity has been banned until January 1969 and a number of top-level political leaders were placed in detention after the coup, including the former Eastern and Midwestern Premiers.

Regionalism based on tribalism has been the greatest political problem of Nigeria. Prior to the coup, the North was governed by the conservative, Muslim-dominated Northern People’s Congress (NPC); the East and Mid-West by the progressive National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC); and the West by the progressive Yorubaland Action Group (AG) initially and in later years by its offshoot, the conservative Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). From independence on, the northern aristocracy dominated the federal political structure. Northern political strength gained steadily, while the southern parties were increasingly in disarray and frustrated. Regional and tribal tensions grew apace. The NPC and NCNC, despite mutual hostility and suspicion, ruled in a coalition government.

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The present regime has imperative political decisions to make to ensure its survival. The rioting in May disclosed the depth of continued tribal animosities that must somehow be muted. Throughout the spring of 1966 the regime stalled the coup leaders' trial, which was demanded by northerners and disapproved of by those southerners who look on them as heroes. By its prolonged ban on political party activity, the government risks the growth of underground politicking that could channel discontented forces toward more radical groups. In the South, there is dissatisfaction over the detention of a number of politicians while none of their northern counterparts have so far suffered the same treatment.

There are indications of disaffection with Ironsi among the middle-grade officers, particularly over his handling of the coup leaders and his reliance on civilians for counsel. As for the military forces in general, their varied ethnic background threatens, in the coup's aftermath, to raise serious discipline problems and may even prevent effective action in crises. The police, though well trained, have recently proved inadequate to handle local disturbances. Nigeria's small navy and nascent air force could provide little support; moreover, training for the latter by a West German mission has reached a virtual standstill due to the obduracy of the Nigerian air force commander. In April 1966, the police Special Branch divested itself of nearly all its British contract officials, which could considerably hamper the branch's effectiveness.

2. Economic

Nigeria's economy is still largely agricultural. With record exports in 1965 of cocoa and crude petroleum, the latter netting over \$100 million, Nigeria had a surplus in its balance of payments of some \$33 million, the first surplus in 11 years. Oil production in the Eastern and Midwestern Regions and offshore promises to increase rapidly; 9 of the 13 participating firms are American. Great Britain remains Nigeria's chief trading partner.

The generally sound economy encouraged a net investment of \$442 million in foreign capital in 1965. In the spring of 1966, the World Bank assured a loan of \$100 million to the Six-Year Development Plan (1962-68) within a 12-month period. Annual and four medium-term development plans are to be drawn up for 1968-88. As of June 1966, arrangements for association with the EEC appeared to be substantially concluded, although this precedent-setting relationship is not expected to take effect until sometime in 1967.

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Other economic measures taken by the new regime include an increase in protective tariffs. The regime still has to cope with severe basic problems of unemployment and of sparse transportation and telecommunications facilities. A sharp general rise in food prices was expected to decline after the harvest in 1966.

3. International Relations

The new regime committed itself to maintain the foreign policies of the former regime, thus continuing Nigeria's traditional moderating role in international and African affairs. It will probably remain a strong voice in the Organization of African Unity (OAU), although the need to counter quick continental-unity schemes such as once espoused by Nkrumah is now obviated. Although a member of the OAU's Liberation Committee of Eleven, Nigeria still favors—in comparison with more militant regimes—a go-slow African policy toward Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa. Relations with Ghana have improved markedly since Nkrumah's deposition. Past Nigerian military assistance to Congo (Leopoldville) and Tanzania earned good feeling for the present Nigerian military leadership.

The Communist nations have not made any significant inroads into Nigeria. The USSR, though having diplomatic relations, has been cautious in its efforts to influence Nigeria. Thus far, Nigeria "recognizes" both Chinas but has relations with neither. In May 1966, Nigeria and France decided to resume relations after a five-year break initiated by Lagos over France's nuclear tests in Algeria.

Relations with the US have remained cordial.

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The number of Peace Corps volunteers is now nearly 700 and may reach 1,000 by the end of 1966. A vast majority of the Nigerian students abroad are studying in the UK and US.

4. Subversion

The most likely organizations to resist actively the current ban on political activity are the Socialist Workers and Farmers Party (SWFP)—Nigeria's Communist Party—and its two arms, the Nigerian Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and Nigerian Youth Congress (NYC). All have received support from Communist countries, but their funds are low. A splinter group of the SWFP, the Nigerian Labor Party, is relatively ineffectual. Past efforts of the SWFP and NYC to attract other radical elements into a "Popular Front" may be resumed. Meanwhile, under the new regime's sponsorship of a united labor movement, the NTUC, already the second most powerful union, combined

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in February 1966 with two other lesser union centrals to form the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), which it will no doubt dominate. The ICFTU-affiliated United Labor Congress (ULC), which rivals the NTUC, did not join the NTUF. The NTUC may thus have improved its position to act as spokesman for the growing discontent of workers and other urban elements of the population.

Sporadic, unorganized violence in the West and the activity of more organized lawless bands in the East also threaten stability. In the Midwest, the banning of the "terroristic" Owegbe Cult does not eliminate it as a potential troublemaker.

5. Ethnic Problems

Tribal loyalties and animosities are too deeply rooted to be decreed away and will long shape events in Nigeria. The reciprocal dislike of the Christian and pagan tribes in the South for the Muslim tribes of the North stems originally from long ago slave trading by the latter. In modern times the cultural gap between the better-educated southerners and the more backward northerners has been a prime source of friction. A lesser barrier is that English, though widely spoken in the South, is used only to a limited extent in the North, where Hausa is still the official language.

Of the three main tribal groupings which constitute over 60 percent of the population, the Muslim Hausa-Fulani dominating the North are a heterogeneous Negroid people of mixed origin. The Hausa were converted to Islam some five centuries ago; their religious ties complement their sense of tribal identity. The Fulani, once immigrants, came in time to be the ruling class of the Hausa states. The Ibo, concentrated in the East, are highly individualistic, ambitious, and eager for education, and many migrated to other parts of Nigeria—their communities in the North were Hausa targets in the May 1966 riots. The Yoruba, predominating in the West, have a strong sense of ethnic identity and tend to cluster about towns, each with its own oba (king).

Of the rest of Nigeria's 250 ethnic groups, several sought autonomy or "statehood" for themselves, including the Tiv in the Middle Belt area of the North, and in the East the Ibibio, Efik, and Ijaw who agitated for a Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers state. The Tiv, the largest pagan tribe in the North, are individualistic to the point of anarchy, and tribal members in the army have constituted a particular discipline problem. Two other tribes of importance are the Kanuri, the second largest northern group after the Hausa-Fulani, and also Muslim; and the Edo, who make up the largest single ethnic group in the Midwest.

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Chronology of Key Events

- 1553 First English ships reach Bight of Benin.
- 1861 British annexation of Lagos.
- 1914 Lagos and interior protectorates amalgamated as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.
- 1944 (August) NCNC founded; Nnamdi Azikiwe General Secretary.
- 1949 (December) NPC organized.
- 1951 (March) AG founded by Obafemi Awolowo.
- 1957 (August) Western and Eastern Regions granted internal self-government.
- 1959 (March) Northern Region granted internal self-government.
(December) Direct elections held for House of Representatives; NPC wins 47%, NCNC 28%, AG 25%.
- 1960 (October) Nigeria becomes an independent federation under NPC-NCNC coalition government.
- 1961 (February) In UN-supervised plebiscite, Northern Cameroons elects to remain in Northern Region; Southern Cameroons joins Republic of Cameroon.
- 1962 (May) Parliament declares state of emergency in Western Region; Chief Awolowo and other AG members arrested on charges of plotting to overthrow government; present ruling party in West formed after AG split.
- 1963 (August) Midwestern Region formed out of eastern part of Western Region.
(October) Nigeria becomes a republic.
- 1964 (February) Government announces results of census confirming Northern Region has over half of population.
(May) United Progressive Grand Alliance is formed by NCNC and AG.
(June) Trade Unionists stage successful general strike.
(August) Nigerian National Alliance formed by NPC and NNDP.
(December) Parliamentary elections held; major crisis follows.
- 1965 (March) Government formed including representatives of all regions and all major parties except AG.
(October) Return of NNDP to power in rigged Western Region elections begins months of violence.
- 1966 (January) Army coup removes main leaders from scene; Parliament dissolved and Federal Military Government set up; study groups formed on new constitution, national unity, economic development.

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(May) Government announces change of Federation to a unitary state composed of provinces and plan to unify civil service, resulting in anti-government, anti-Ibo riots by Hausas in the North.

Selected Factual Data**LAND (U)**

357,000 sq. mi.; 24% arable (14% of total land area lying fallow), 32% forested, 44% desert, waste, urban or other

PEOPLE (U)

Population: roughly 50 million; males 15-49, 13,605,000; 6,840,000 fit for military service; no conscription

Ethnic Divisions: 250 tribal groups of which most important are Hausa-Fulani (north) Ibo and Yoruba (south); these three tribes total over 60% of the population; about 27,000 non-Africans

Religion: 43% animists, 38% Muslims, 19% Christian

Language: English official; Hausa, Yoruba, and Ibo also widely used

Labor force: approximately 21.5 million, engaged in subsistence agriculture; a small proportion, only 600,000, are wage earners, of whom 8% are in agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing; 7% mining and quarrying; 8% manufacturing; 22% construction; 2% electricity; 8% commerce; 8% transportation and communication; 37% services

Organized labor: about 400,000 wage earners, less than 2% of total labor, belong to some 300 unions

GOVERNMENT (Confidential)

Capital: Lagos

Regional breakdown: capital district of Lagos and 33 provinces distributed among 4 groups corresponding to former "regions"

Type: independent within Commonwealth since Oct. 1960; became a republic within Commonwealth in Oct. 1963; military rule since Jan. 1966 coup

Branches: National Military Government, administered by Supreme Military Council and the Executive Council (cabinet); both Councils almost identical in composition; justices on all levels appointed by Supreme Military Council on recommendation of independent Judicial Advisory Committee; former parliament dissolved

Government leader: Maj. Gen. Johnson T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi, head of Federal Military Government and Supreme Commander of Nigerian Armed Forces

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Suffrage: universal adult suffrage (apparently to include hitherto disfranchised women in Northern provinces) promised by Gen. Ironsi

Elections: next election to be held after "a system of government acceptable to the people has been formulated."

Political parties and leaders: political parties and politically active tribal societies were dissolved by decree on 24 May 1966

Member of: UN (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, IMF, IBRD, ICAO, UPU, ITU, WMO, IMCO), Organization of African Unity, Commonwealth; negotiating association with EEC

ECONOMY (Secret—No Foreign Dissem)

GNP: US\$4.8 billion (FY 1965), probably under \$100 per capita

Agriculture: main crops—peanuts, cotton, rubber, yams, cassava, sorghum, millet, corn, rice, cocoa; almost self-sufficient

Major industries: processing industries—oil palm, peanut, cotton, rubber, petroleum, wood, hides, skins; manufacturing industries—textiles, cement, building materials, food products, footwear, chemical, printing, cosmetics, ceramics

Electric power: 256,000 kw. capacity (1963); 1,067 million kw.-hr. produced (1964)

Exports: \$748 million (1965); peanuts, palm products, cocoa, rubber, petroleum, cotton

Imports: \$768 million (1965); machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods, textiles, chemicals

Trade: principal trade with UK, US, Netherlands, Japan, West Germany

Aid: UK \$11.7 million (1964); US (through FY 1964)—economic \$125.4 million, military \$0.7 million; Czechoslovakia \$14 million credit extended (1965); other donors include IBRD, West Germany and the UN

Exchange rate: 1 Nigerian pound=US\$2.80 (official)

Fiscal year: 1 April–31 March

COMMUNICATIONS (Confidential)

Railroads: 1,989 mi., 3'6" gage; government owned

Highways: 45,498 mi. (1962); 7,706 mi. paved, 37,792 mi. improved earth

Inland waterways: 5,331 mi. consisting of Niger and Benue Rivers and smaller rivers and creeks; these constitute extensive waterway system and provide important means of transportation

Pipelines: crude oil, 322 mi.; natural gas, 19 mi.

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Ports: 2 principal (Lagos, Port Harcourt), 2 secondary, 5 minor
Merchant marine: 8 cargo ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 50,022
GRT; 78,500 DWT

Civil air: 13 major transport aircraft

Airfields: 61 total, 60 usable; 9 with permanent-surface runways;
1 with runway 8,000-11,999 ft.; 20 with runways 4,000-7,999 ft.;
4 seaplane stations

Telecommunications: domestic telephone and telegraph, fair to
good; telex and facsimile to London; broadcast good; main center
Lagos with international HF radio service; 58,600 telephones

DEFENSE FORCES (Confidential)

Personnel: army 10,000, navy 900 (including 4 British officers, 6
Indian officers, 2 Canadian officers), air force 920 (excluding 75
West German air force personnel and civilians), federal police
force 18,000

Major ground units: 5 infantry battalions, plus a sixth being formed

Ships: 1 destroyer escort, 1 patrol, 2 mine warfare, 1 amphibious
warfare, 5 auxiliary and service craft

Aircraft: 36 prop

Supply: dependent on US and Western Europe

Military budget: for fiscal year ending 31 Mar. 1965, \$48,510,000;
less than 7% of total budget

National Intelligence Survey (NIS) Material

The following sections of the NIS are relevant:

NIS Area 50B (Nigeria)

GENERAL SURVEY and the following specialized sections:

Sec 20 Introduction—Military Geography

Sec 21 Military Geographic Regions

Sec 22 Coasts and Landing Beaches

Sec 24 Topography

Sec 25 Urban areas

Sec 31 Railway

Sec 32 Highway

Sec 33 Inland Waterway

Sec 43 Religion, Education, and Public Information

Sec 44 Manpower

Sec 45 Health and Sanitation

Sec 54 Public Order and Safety

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Sec 60 Introduction—Economic
Sec 61 Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry
Sec 62 Fuels and Power
Sec 63 Minerals and Metals
Sec 64 Manufacturing and Construction
Sec 65 Trade and Finance
Sec 91-94 Map and Chart Appraisal

NIS Area 50 (West Africa)

Sec 35 Ports and Naval Facilities
Gazetteer Volume I

NIS Area 50-II, 51 (West Africa and Liberia)

Sec 23 Weather and Climate

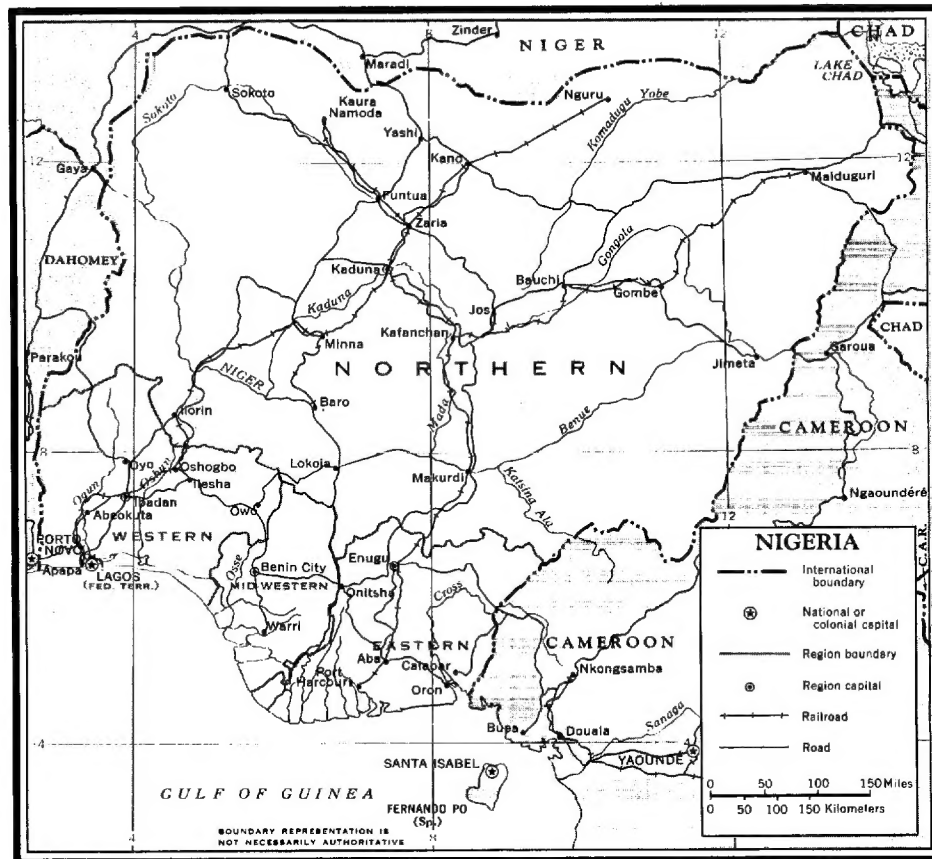


Map

The best available general reference map is: The London Geographical Institute; Nigeria; 1:1,400,000; 1963 (George Philip & Son, Ltd.).

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